

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 OES-07 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DOE-11
ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 SOE-02 SS-15
COME-00 /076 R

DRAFTED BY NASA/LI-15/LROBOCK:JC/PM/ISO:CCORDER:DME
APPROVED BY PM/ISO:JEBURGESS
DMA HQ, CODE PPS/PSCHWIMMER(PHONE)
OES/APT/SA:R.EDDINGTON
PM/ISP:M.MICHAUD(SUBS)
EA/RA:M.EILAND
OSD/ISA:T.KEENAN

-----007596 072023Z /46

O R 071944Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE
INFO DMA WASHDC PPS
DMATC WASHDC 52310
SECDEF WASHDC/ISA/FMRA
NASA WASHDC L1-15

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 058045

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TSPA

SUBJECT: SEASAT-A SATELLITE PROGRAM

REF: STATE 42627, WELLINGTON 888

1. EMBASSIES SHOULD UNDERSTAND SEASAT PROGRAM IS
UNCLASSIFIED SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM MANAGED BY NASA. NASA
COOPERATING WITH DOD, NOAA, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN
DATA USE ACTIVITIES. SEASAT DATA THEMSELVES AND DOD
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TRACKING PROGRAM IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA UNCLASSIFIED.
HOWEVER, USE OF DATA BY DOD IN PROJECT REFERRED TO IN
REFTEL A IS CLASSIFIED. TO AVOID CONFUSION AND POSSIBLE
MISTAKEN IMPRESSIONS, DISCUSSIONS PURSUANT TO REFTEL A
SHOULD TAKE PLACE WITH MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES OR DMA
MAPPING PROGRAM COUNTERPARTS. DISCUSSIONS OF SEASAT
PROGRAM PER SE APPROPRIATE FOR DISCUSSION WITH CIVIL

AGENCIES. (CONFIDENTIAL)

2. NASA MAILING DIRECT TO EMBASSY SEASAT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION BOOK WITH MORE DETAILED INFORMATION. SCIENCE OFFICE MAY DRAW ON FOLLOWING FOR SEASAT SYMPOSIUM. SATELLITE SCHEDULED FOR LAUNCH MAY 1978.

ALTITUDE WILL BE 800 KM, INCLINATION 108 DEGREES, WEIGHT ON ORBIT 1820 KG. SEASAT SPACECRAFT HAS FIVE SENSORS: (UNCLASSIFIED)

A. COMPRESSED PULSE RADAR ALTIMETER--WILL MEASURE SPACECRAFT ALTITUDE BETWEEN SPACECRAFT AND OCEAN SURFACE, AND MEASURE WAVE HEIGHT FROM 1 TO ABOUT 20 METERS (REPLACES GEOS-3 ALTIMETER). (UNCLASSIFIED)

B. MICROWAVE WIND SCATTEROMETER--WILL MEASURE WIND SPEED AT OCEAN SURFACE, AND DETERMINE WIND DIRECTION. (UNCLASSIFIED)

C. SCANNING MULTI-SPECTRAL MICROWAVE RADIOMETER (SMMR) --WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SEA SURFACE TEMPERATURES AND HIGH SPEED WIND AS WELL AS ICE MEASUREMENTS (SAME INSTRUMENT WILL BE FLOWN ON NIMBUS-G). (UNCLASSIFIED)

D. SCANNING VISIBLE/INFRARED RADIOMETER--WILL PROVIDE
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IMAGES OF VISIBLE AND THERMAL INFRARED EMISSION FROM OCEANS, COASTAL AND ATMOSPHERIC FEATURES IN SUPPORT OF OTHER INSTRUMENTS AND WILL IDENTIFY CURRENTS AND STORMS. (UNCLASSIFIED)

ABOVE SENSORS WILL BE OPERATED ON GLOBAL BASIS; I.E., DATA FROM EVERY ORBIT WILL BE RECORDED ON TAPE AND TRANSMITTED TO RECEIVING STATIONS IN US. (UNCLASSIFIED)

E. SYNTHETIC APERTURE IMAGING RADAR (SAR)--WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION ON WAVE PATTERNS AND DYNAMIC BEHAVIOR. SAR EXPECTED TO FUNCTION THROUGH CLOUDS AND RAIN TO PROVIDE WAVE PATTERNS NEAR SHORE AND PICTURES OF ICE, OIL SPILLS, ETC. SINCE RESOLUTION OF PROCESSED SAR DATA APPROXIMATELY 25 METERS, NASA EXPECTS UTILITY FOR IDENTIFYING INDIVIDUAL SHIPS AND FOR MONITORING 200 MILE ZONE WILL BE LIMITED AT BEST. BECAUSE OF VERY HIGH DATA RATE FROM SAR, DATA CAN BE RECEIVED ONLY IN REAL TIME AT GROUND RECEIVING STATIONS. NASA WILL RECEIVE DATA OF COASTAL US AREAS WITH US STATIONS; CANADA AND EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY ALSO PLAN ESTABLISHMENT OF DIRECT RECEPTION AND PROCESSING FACILITIES. (UNCLASSIFIED)

3. DATA USE INVESTIGATIONS: NASA PLANS TO ISSUE PRIOR TO MAY 1978 LAUNCH TO INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPPORTUNITY FOR SEASAT DATA USE INVESTIGATIONS. AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SCIENTISTS MAY WISH TO CONDUCT SOME EXPERIMENTS USING NASA RECEIVED DATA AND THEN EVALUATE DESIRABILITY OF HEAVIER INVOLVEMENT WHEN FUTURE

OF SEASAT PROGRAM CLEARER. FOR AREAS WHERE NO DIRECT RECEPTION CAPABILITY EXISTS, ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE LIMITED TO SENSORS OTHER THAN SAR. (UNCLASSIFIED)

4. DIRECT RECEPTION: NASA HAS RECEIVED PROPOSALS FROM CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY FOR SCIENTIFIC CONFIDENTIAL

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RESEARCH ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDE THE DIRECT RECEPTION OF SEASAT DATA. IN THE CASES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, WE WOULD BE PLEASED TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING DIRECT RECEPTION OF NON-SAR DATA IF THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT (2-METER DISH, 25 KB/SEC) IS AVAILABLE IN COUNTRY TO PERMIT TIMELY STATION ESTABLISHMENT. NASA ALSO PREPARED TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL FOR DIRECT RECEPTION OF SAR DATA IN CONNECTION WITH A RESEARCH ACTIVITY. THIS WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FACILITIES (EQUAIVALENT TO LANDSAT STATION WITH ADDITIONAL SAR-UNIQUE RECORDING EQUIPMENT) TO ACCOMMODATE THE DIFFERENT FREQUENCY AND HIGHER DATA RATE OF SAR. BEFORE SUBMITTING SUCH A PROPOSAL, GONZ SHOULD BE AWARE THAT (A) SEASAT-A IS EXPERIMENTAL SATELLITE WITH NO FOLLOW-ON SPACECRAFT YET APPROVED; (B) LEADTIME FOR ACQUIRING RECEIVING AND PROCESSING EQUIPMENT FOR SAR IS APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR, AND INVOLVES SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT IF FACILITIES NOT ALREADY AVAILABLE. (UNCLASSIFIED)

5. SUGGEST THAT SCIENCE OFFICER REFER FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM SYMPOSIUM TO NASA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SATELLITES, SEASAT-A, SPACE PROGRAMS, TRACKING STATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE058045
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: 15/LROBOCK:JC/PM/ISO:CCORDER:DME
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780103-0220
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780396/aaaaddpq.tel
Line Count: 157
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d7b732cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 42627, 78 WELLINGTON 888
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3413549
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEASAT-A SATELLITE PROGRAM
TAGS: TSPA, NZ
To: WELLINGTON CANBERRA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d7b732cc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014